535 to the prescribed two or three, tiring themselves out to the plaudits of
527 those close by.

To the old-timers, however, the modern version of the traditional dance was a sad commentary on the state of things. They thought the young people too soft. After I had been watching the *horo* for some time an old man hobbled up to me. I had seen him shaking his head and muttering to himself, so I asked him, "What do you think of it, *dedo*?" He grunted, "It's all right for the young people to have a little fun, but they aren't as strong as I used to be when I was young. I used to hoe corn, harvest wheat, and come back to dance all evening. The young people can't do that now. And I wasn't as healthy as my father used to be."

535 The village registrar, Bai Angel, told me why there had been a declining interest in the *hora*, especially those which used to occur around the neighborhood fountains. About seven o'clock the people used to go to the pasture to get their animals. If the animals were slow in coming, then the people danced the *horo* there in the fields. When the animals had been taken home, and after the girls had finished up their housework, they went with jugs to one of the three fountains in the village and there danced again until eleven o'clock. In 1924 more fountains were installed in the village, thus tending to break up the larger groups which gathered around the three original fountains. The girls preferred to carry water from the fountains nearest their homes, and no longer attended the evening *horo*.

● 517 Tavern life was another, less colorful way of passing the bleak
521 winter days. In the four ill-ventilated *kruchmi* the men gathered to
275 discuss the harvest and to argue over the news read aloud from yester-
203 day's newspaper. Some man sought his godfather, or the godfather of a recently christened son or daughter, and invited him to have a drink of *rakiya* (plum brandy) or wine. Sometimes men who had completed a business deal drank to clinch it. Men who had been in the army together told the same tall tales of adventure over and over again, re-creating those experiences which lifted them for a while out of their limited village environment. There were seldom any fights, because the frequenters put an end to disagreements before they got

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out of hand. The fact that not all patrons of the tavern drank liquor was shown by the comment of one of the villagers:

"I come to the tavern chiefly for the newspaper. I have a strong will, drink little, and know when to stop. The young men when starting the temperance association asked me to be president but I couldn't give up coming here for the newspaper. The small coffee house across the square has only room enough for five or six people and there's no point in going there. Many blame me for going to the tavern, but they have no interest in finding out what is going on in the world."

One advantage of visiting the tavern included the announcements that the town crier always made there as well as out in the square.

The tavern keepers, however, had no illusions about their standing in the public estimation. All of them were of the same peasant stock as their patrons, but had sold some of their land in order to set themselves up in business.

"If the people of the village took a vote, the majority would favor shutting up all the taverns. The people don't like us," was the tart comment of one tavern keeper. This dislike sprang from the indebtedness of so many people to the tavern keepers, as well as from the strong feeling many have toward the social consequences of excessive alcoholism.

There were, however, a number of men who had to miss the morning session at the Dragalevtsy *kruchmi*. They were the milkmen. Each morning while it was still dark eight tiny donkeys left their yards, pattered down the slope just outside the village, and followed the straight gravel road five miles to Sofia. They were accompanied by their prodding masters who kept an eye on the two or three large cans of milk which had been strapped onto the wooden saddles. These donkeys long ago learned to swallow any pride they might have had, for each morning, with monotonous regularity, they were overtaken by the high two-wheeled horse-drawn milk carts used by the remaining thirty Dragalevtsy milkmen. Once in Sofia, the majority of the milkmen covered their routes, knocking at the doors of the regular customers and waiting patiently for a container into which to pour a quart or so of milk from the large cans. The round completed, most of the milkmen began at once to retrace the long uphill journey from the city's outskirts to the village.

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travelers, dressed in their brightest, newest garments, were speeded on their way. The friends and relatives loaded them with money and presents of clothing, food, and wool, which the pilgrims were to donate to the great and holy monastery. The whole ceremony of leave-taking was made a part of the bright landscape by the flowers everywhere—on the dress of the pilgrims, fastened to the gifts, and carried in huge bunches. Upon their return a few days later the dusty pilgrims were met at the outskirts of the village and escorted home through the blue twilight by those eager to hear of every adventure during the days and nights in the great mountains, whose jagged walls have protected Rila Monastery for hundreds of years.

Formal piety, as shown in pilgrimages, was only one of the major characteristics which these Bulgarian villagers possessed. The Dragalevtsy people, especially the men, were predominantly literate. Bulgaria, despite what seems a forbidding Cyrillic alphabet, has the highest rate of literacy of all Balkan countries, a fact which can be attributed to the tendency to regard education as a panacea for individual and social ills. While only 44 per cent of the women over fifteen years of age could read and write, 92 per cent of the men were literate. Of course, I often came upon groups of peasants crowded around a friend slowly spelling out a newspaper article aloud, but these little clusters of attentive listeners originated because of the scarcity of newspaper subscribers, not necessarily because of illiteracy.

The Dragalevtsy people were also law-abiding. During the first three years I knew the village, and informants said that the record went much farther back than that, no Dragalevtsy peasant had been taken to Sofia for imprisonment. There was no local jail, nor any need for one. This was not a sign of the inefficiency of local police, but rather an indication of the peaceable and honest traits of the people.

In many other characteristics the villagers shared what have come to be known as the universal "rural virtues," for theirs was an agrarian way of life. More than three-fourths of the family heads were peasant proprietors. In addition to these, there were two other occupational groups: the intellectuals and the artisans. Despite their small number, the intelligentsia, as they were called by the peasants, were the most influential group in the community. Whenever the

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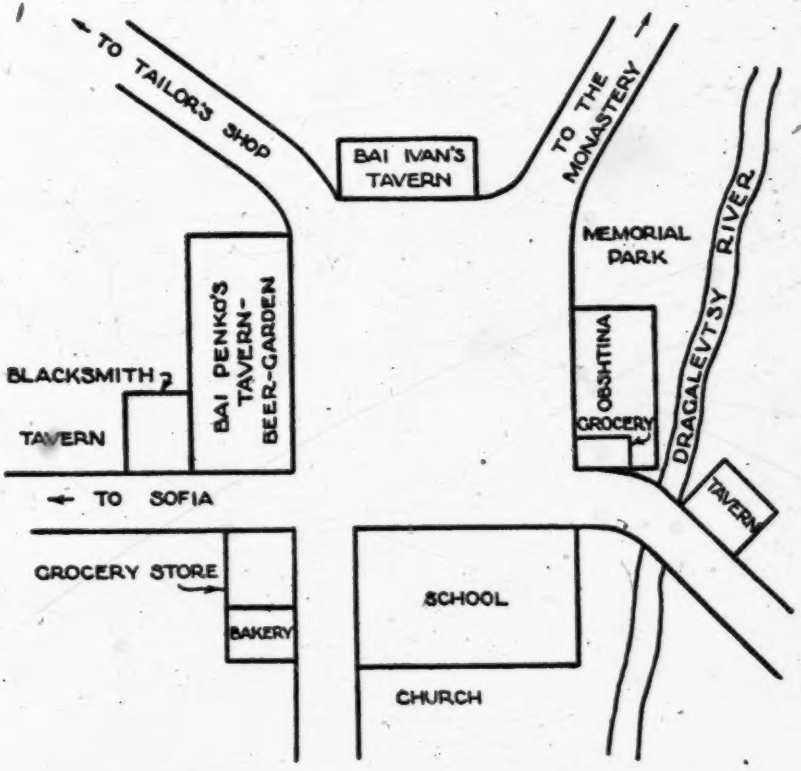

Renaissance Square, the focal point of Dragalevtsy's communal life

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weather was agreeable I was sure to find several of them playing cards in front of Bai Penko's tavern on the northern side of Renaissance Square, where the winter *horo* was held. Even though they sat engrossed in their game, they could still keep an eye on what was happening in the village, since this square was the focal point of community life. The mayor, for instance, could watch the Obshtina, or municipal building, across the square, as well as all traffic that entered this rocky plot of ground on its way to the city of Sofia below or to the monastery higher up Mount Vitosha. The priest could look past the modern school building, flanking the western side of the square, to the church just beyond. The village doctor's husband was near in

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case his wife needed him, although he invariably grumbled in his native Russian upon being called away from the game. A fourth hand during the summer was a reserve army officer whose intense love for German efficiency and ideology and whose contempt for the "ignorant, unreliable peasant" became bywords in the community. Peasants sitting on the porch of Bai Ivan's tavern on the eastern side of the square could observe with seeming indifference the intelligentsia at play, distracted though they were at times by the fervent temperance lectures delivered by the tavern keeper's daughter-in-law whenever she placed a glass of *rakiya* in front of a customer.

These intelligentsia proved to be interesting people. The mayor had a good education, completed by the study of law in Russia. His father had been a priest in Boyana, a village just four miles to the west, so the mayor, himself a *Shop*, knew the workings of the peasant mind. When he was sent to the village as mayor back in 1934, after the *coup d'état* of that year abolished all elections and deprived many local officials of their jobs, he issued a flowery proclamation which contained such thoughts as these:

> Therefore, as I take up my duties, desiring greatly to use the small abilities that I possess for the economic and cultural uplift of the villages included in the commune entrusted to my care, I wish to express my good feelings of loyalty and friendliness and attachment to the population and to certify that I am ready to work for the uplift of our commune and to be the loyal conveyor of its economic and cultural interests and needs.
>
> Imbued with the idea that we are all members of the same family, sons of mother Bulgaria, let us forget the recent past of shameful partisan struggles and begin to live as genuine brothers—Bulgarians filled with mutual love, patience, harmony, respect, and good will.
>
> Let us do our duty to these beautifully situated villages, perched on the slope of Mount Vitosha, and make them attractive gardens, with culture, and places of merriment and songs.

The people soon learned that the mayor when excited talked so rapidly that he failed to enunciate clearly, and they always enjoyed mimicking this mannerism. They did not particularly resent his management of their affairs, despite the fact that he had been sent by the central government which gave local communes no choice in

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Usually after midnight, the singing at the *sedenka* began to decrease in volume, conversation became dull, and the boys sensed that it was time to go. After their departure the hostess often served refreshments such as a soggy cheese pie *(banitsa)*, and the girls might or might not spend the night. The courting aspect of the gathering was emphasized by the fact that none of the married people of the household, except the mother of the girl acting as hostess, could be present. Even she was absent much of the time in some of the homes.

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It was at these *sedenki*, that I collected a number of village proverbs, which were a real conversational aid to young people somewhat tongue-tied in mixed company.

"A kind word opens an iron gate."

"God gives but does not drive into the stall."

"A wet person is not afraid of rain."

"Listen much, speak little."

"Short are the legs of a lie."

"Stretch out your feet according to your quilt."

"I am telling your daughter so that daughter-in-law may hear [speaking indirectly]."

"After the rain, raincape."

"Every pear has a stem."

"Give advice freely but not money."

"The thirsty carry water."

"A dog that barks much puts a wolf in the stall."

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Within recent years the *vecherinki* provided young people other means of getting acquainted. The purpose of a *vecherinka*, or evening entertainment in the schoolhouse, was not to get any work done, but to raise money for some worthy cause. The villagers bought tickets to a program of music or drama, provided by both imported and local talent. Auctions and lotteries were features of most *vecherinki*. After the program was over the people joined in dancing: first, for an hour or so, they danced the native *hora*, to be followed, when the old folks

[A "sedenka" is a spinning party — The Bulgarian part of an American pioneer combination corn husking and quilting bee — Analyst]

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went home, by village versions of western dances. It was a strange sensation on these occasions to see fifty young people trying to do the fox trot, when it was obvious that not more than five couples were experienced at it. But those who knew were patient with the novices. The excited faces were flushed not with the interest in learning a new step but rather with the daring of the dance's embrace. I asked quite a few of my acquaintances how they felt about these dances. Most of the older people who had seen the modern dances and many of the younger people considered them very immoral. In the words of one of these conservatives, "The boys especially are eager to learn a modern dance so that they can do very immoral things, which are very sweet for the young."

Although these evening entertainments had less importance in the social life of the people than the *sedenki* or the promenade, the villagers were proud of them as a formal medium of recreation in imitation of what one would find in a city. It was a new experience for many men to buy a ticket and be shown a seat; and such new experiences were dear to a peasant heart if they did not take him too far away from the ordinary world in which he moved. The first *vecherinka* was given in 1925. The teachers after that tried to give one or two more, but no one attended, so the practice was discontinued. In 1930, however, the *Chitalishte* (Reading Room Association) started them again, with the result that in the following years four or five were held during a winter.

Another innovation which played an important part in Dragalevtsy courtship was the Sunday afternoon promenade, which had displaced the traditional Sunday *horo*. The promenade course extended from Renaissance Square up a rocky street which bends to the left for a quarter of a mile. Here the young people in their Sunday best turned about and retraced their steps to the Square. One reason for the popularity of the promenade was its modernity; another was the absence of a church ban against it during Lent in contrast to the traditional interruption of *hora* during that seven-week period.

Even in the promenade there was no pairing off except in the case of some engaged couple. Indeed, walking in a twosome was tantamount to announcing an engagement. So village boys in twos,

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threes, and fours passed village girls locked arm in arm; appropriate (and inappropriate) comments were made as they passed. Up and down they went, greeting each other again and again, joking, blushing, laughing heartily, each wondering at the impression made upon some favorite member of the opposite sex.

These modern ways contrasted sharply with the laconic statements of those villagers who had married many years ago.

"When we grew older we began to know each other more intimately and went together for two or three years."

"We were neighbors before marriage. We met every holiday at the *horo* and in the evenings at the fountain. Our wedding festivities lasted three days."

"My wife and I knew one another as children. Outsiders urged both of us to marry, so I stole her. She would not agree to marry me until after I had stolen her."

Often the relatives of the couple involved kept saying that it would be a good thing to have the two persons married, and thus brought about a match they considered advantageous.

In Dragalevtsy human nature asserted itself in universal forms; for example, a village Lothario boasted:

"I had had thirty-five girls, and had gone 'hand-in-hand' with one for two years. But I fell in love with my wife because she was modest and had not talked to boys."

I might add here that the parents of the girl objected to the match, but only because she was taller than her suitor.

Two-fifths of the Dragalevtsy-born men, in their search for a wife, preferred the novelty that other villages afforded. More often than not a Bulgarian youth would all of a sudden get a fixed idea in his mind, "I've got to get a wife." The search was then under way. In such a state of mind the young man was not apt to wander far. The villages in their order of popularity were Boyana, Simeonovo, and Bistritsa. Only two other villages had more than four representatives among the married women. These likewise were not far away. It was significant that no man born in Dragalevtsy and currently living there had a wife born in Sofia. This meant that if a Sofia-

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CHAPTER VI

MARRIAGE

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THE BULGARIAN groom settled down naturally into the role of the married man as the embarrassment of the first few days of good-natured joshing wore away. He took less and less interest in the Sunday afternoon promenade, preferring to sit in front of the tavern with the other married men where he liked to be complimented on the woman he had chosen in the same way that he would appreciate compliments on a cow just bought. However, as marriage progressed he began to respect his wife as a person rather than as a possession.

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It was when the first child arrived, in a year or so, that the husband suddenly felt a sense of tremendous importance. He was no longer just a married man; he was a father. Though the beginning of married life had little effect upon his behavior, the fact of parenthood changed even his facial expression, his earnestness in his work, and his whole attitude toward the future. I sensed this often in the requests that people made for photographs. Few young men came to ask for pictures of their brides; but many wanted pictures of their infants, especially of the sons. In the case of the first child they would hold him up squarely in front of the camera so that he would fill up the whole picture if possible. But as children continued to arrive year after year, the fathers often asked, "Could we get our new oxen into the picture too?"

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Most of the men accepted marriage as they did the weather: inevitable, sometimes balmy and sometimes disagreeable, but utterly essential. They did not go out of their way particularly to adjust themselves to marriage, and spoke little of marriage. They patiently waited for parenthood, which was revolutionary in its effect upon them.

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did the most talking. The women found it difficult to say which one helped the others most, because "this depends so much upon one's special knowledge of cooking, caring for the sick, and sewing." Each woman was expert in a different line, but all were willing to help in any way.

The distinction between age groups broke down when the group was hard at work, as the work was then more important than the flow of gossip. In general, the gossiping groups got together more frequently in the summertime and on Sundays. Women found their chief recreation with women, and men with men, though the men said they needed the stimulation of tavern society.

This willingness of the men to spend money for recreation and to limit their wives to the questionable joys of gossip illustrated the common saying, "Bulgaria is a man's country." A Dragalevtsy peasant saw nothing strange in the sight of a man riding a donkey while his wife trudged along behind carrying their purchases home from market. Or if a man returned alone from market, having ridden all the way in his wagon, his wife, tired from a day in the field, went out to carry in his things, saying, "He's weary and needs my help." She was always careful to make no queries about the day's activities, although she might be bursting with curiosity to know what had happened at market. She went about her work and waited until he was comfortably fed and settled, knowing full well that then she would have a complete report. Usually her husband made himself out to be the hero of each little episode, but "men are like that," she would say.

The well trained wife always deferred to her husband. If ever I asked a question in the presence of both, the woman turned her eyes to see what response her husband made. If he made a gesture as though to say, "You go ahead and answer," then she began to talk, becoming silent whenever her husband wished to interject any comments.

What was even more conclusive proof that Bulgaria was a man's country, and certainly that Dragalevtsy was a man's village, was the obedience of women to their husband's command. I asked thirty wives in the course of my family interviews:

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Kosharki (Sheep folds). This was a game which had been played extensively a generation ago, but its use was dying out in the village. The children would build miniature sheep folds, houses, and fences out of rocks. This game corresponded after a fashion to our building with blocks.

The outstanding characteristic of all these games was that they required little equipment and few participants. At home, the play groups were inevitably restricted to the family and nearest neighbors, often relatives. At school, children could choose relatives and other children in the same grade. Play groups in the fields were formed on the basis of family ownership of land and common pasture. These latter groups often gathered in the village and went to the fields together, the youngsters carrying loaves of bread, baked peppers, and fresh tomatoes. Even in play, the family was important, for every type of play group almost automatically included relatives. As was previously pointed out, there was less quarreling among the children who were related. I often heard: "You shouldn't hit him; he's your relative."

The new types of play were still limited. The radio, comic papers, and movies were almost unknown to the village child, just as they were to the average adult. Only twenty-five newspapers reached the village daily, and these had few comic strips. Magazines and books were a rarity. Sofia bookshops had some exquisite children's books, but I never saw one in the village. Sometimes when I came into a village home on a winter evening, I would see an unforgettable picture. Near the fire the father sat quietly, elbows on knees, the mother was spinning near the one dim electric bulb, and in the center, crouched at the low table, a boy, nine or ten years old, was laboriously reading some fragment of a periodical to his parents. Their pride and pleasure was unspoken but obvious.

There was one radio in the village, and the children were of course conscious of it as it blared incessantly in Renaissance Square, but it was not a part of their life, any more than the movies or trains. Only 45 per cent of the total population, including babies, had ever attended a movie, and less than 40 per cent had ever been on a train.

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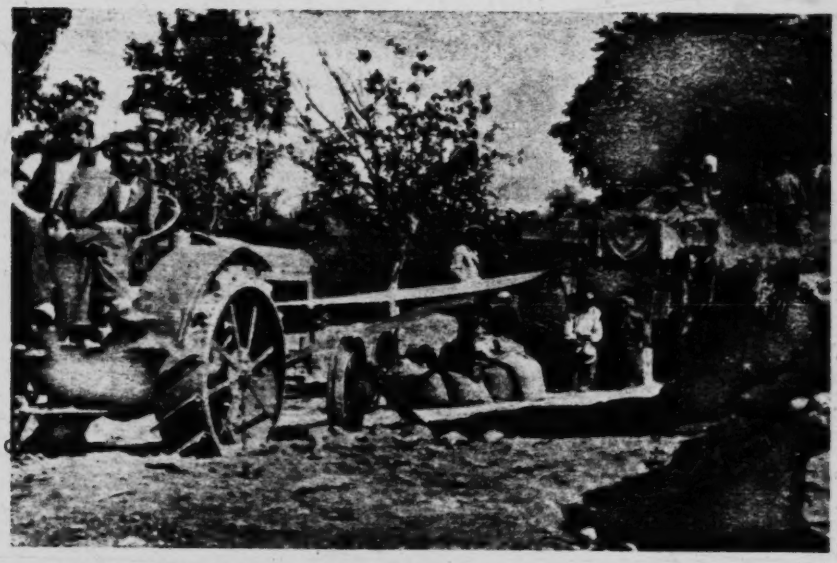

". . . they threshed the wheat of fifty-five farms . . ." *See page 151.*

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"The people . . . customarily associated liquor with holidays and leisure times." *See page 155.*

[Facing p. 145]

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forms of the religion; and usually the prevailing religion has a monopoly in its field. Where there once existed two or three competing religions, the peasants now have a syncretistic set of beliefs that almost all of the people accept.

The population in a familistic society tends to be stable. The folk legends and religious beliefs stress the importance of remaining at home. Permanence becomes a virtue, for travel outside introduces too much novelty. Separation places a strain upon the family relationships, which must be kept at full vigor in the interest of community self-preservation.

Recreation is personalized instead of being commercialized. Peasants, as far as possible, spend their leisure hours in the company of others, to say nothing of the many hours women spend working with each other within a family or neighborhood circle. Just as the villagers have ceremonial ways of doing many things, they also have formal ways, or proverbs, of saying many things. This we saw earlier in the description of the *Sedenki.* Proverbs reinforce those beliefs that help maintain the familistic society, and serve as convenient means of self-expression. At the same time they are standards of behavior.

Because recreation and economic life are personal, the familistic society has little need for much reading and writing. The priest, the middlemen, the taxgatherers, and a few others who early associated themselves with the village economy needed to "figure," but the rest of the people had little concern with that.

In most family-dominated societies, life is man-centered. In some areas this arrangement is related to religious beliefs; in others, it is related to the economic organization of the family in which somebody has to give orders necessary to the carrying out of the daily activities. A recognized head, conscious of his own importance, acts authoritatively in directing his family group.

The local government is traditionally managed by elders, who represent families rather than political parties or individuals. The village elders make their decisions from the standpoint of what is good for the village as a whole in the light of precedents rather than from a narrow legalism. The religious writings or sacred legends are conveniently cited to justify the actions they take. Such govern-

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taxes or to attend some social function, the villagers say, "Oh, he's from the *mahala*." In this sense, therefore, they are thinking not at all of any family relationship between the people of that settlement.

NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS: THE *Susedstvo*. For a clearer picture of social interaction we must turn to a smaller unit than the *mahala*: namely, the *susedstvo*[6] which is a complex of houses whose yards adjoin or face each other across a narrow street. The peasants say, "Without neighbors life is impossible," or "God help those who have bad neighbors" and they are thinking of next-door neighbors. Bulgarian writers especially in reminiscing about their childhood tell of the free interchange of goods between neighbors. In any time of need, whether it be of food, garments, or work, the neighbors were always called upon to render aid. That is still true today, though there are two tendencies setting in: first, many villagers prefer to go to relatives living elsewhere in the village for aid rather than to go to a next-door neighbor; second, nowadays neighbors when they lend live more in expectation of financial remuneration. In other words, the commercialistic spirit is pervading even neighborhood contacts. Some villagers feel this more keenly than others.

The *susedstvo* therefore, like the *mahala*, is a geographical unit which is the scene of intense social interaction, though this interaction takes place through ordinary individuals and groups rather than through the *susedstvo* itself, thought of in terms of a psychical entity. It is an interesting fact that personal friendships and preferences sometimes carry women outside of the neighborhood for even the ordinary needs of life. For example, Anna may live next to Gorka but may prefer the companionship of Mara who lives four or five houses down the street. Sometimes this friendship goes to such an extent that Anna will draw water from a more distant fountain in order to meet there with Mara.

However, no number of exceptions can do away with the fact that women who are neighbors depend greatly upon one another. Not only in times of crisis such as birth, death, or marriage are the neighbors' services invaluable, but are especially useful in varying the tedium of everyday life. If a woman has half an hour to spare, she is apt to pick up her knitting or spinning and go to a neighbor's house for a chat while doing her handwork. After a while, visits of such a sort become so habitual that a woman would find it difficult to get along without them. It must be remembered that the Bulgarian woman has no magazines and no radio to entertain her at home. Her only source of entertainment is to share some other neighbor's company.

Newcomers to a neighborhood (and these are usually women) have to go through a period of assimilation. Not only must they bear the embarrassing

[6] Many of the peasants still use for neighbor the word *komshia*, a Bulgarized form of the Turkish *koms*.

538 One of the most characteristic features of modern
517 Bulgarian literature is its militant assertion of its life and it expresses this assertion by an unceasing struggle for social and political ideals and by a constant pursuit of an artistic perfection in which the esthetic ideal is absorbed and transfigured in order to pass over the line of demarcation between art and reality.

A democrat by nature, the Bulgarian cannot tolerate much of aristocracy. He wishes cultural values to be made accessible for all, so that all can derive profit from
000 them. Thus in the tenth century when darkness still covered Western Europe, a Bulgarian ecclesiastical writer, the Presbyter Kozma, exclaims in anger: "Thou, rich man, who hast in abundance all the books of the Old and New Testaments and other books filled with instructive words and who knowest all of them, hast thou not understood that thou must lay down thy soul for thy neighbors? Why dost thou bar the road for the salvation of mankind by hiding the Word of God from thy brothers? Those books which thou hast stored away were written that through them all men might be saved, and not that they might be devoured by worms and mildew. Therefore, thou man, do not shut thyself up in thy library and do not hide the Word of God from those who

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hero has an immortal place and the sympathy of all those who are interested in literary types. 538

* * * * *

Aleko Konstantinov ends the series of authors of the period between 1880 and 1900 in whose works the social elements predominate over the purely aesthetic and who use artistic effects merely to proclaim social ideas and to realize patriotic or universal spiritual ideals. 517 538

After the death of Aleko Konstantinov who was killed in a political brawl in 1899, we no longer meet authors who aim to express characteristic features of the national life. The political life of the country was becoming more settled. Bulgaria was growing stronger, with confidence in its future and its political independence and the old problems ceased to be of all absorbing interest. New problems appeared,— chiefly of a cultural nature. The epoch of spiritual development was commencing, in which the artists played a role not of social workers but of leaders bidden to satisfy the immaterial needs of their compatriots. In the new epoch the Bulgarian writers turned their attentions to the emptiness which they beheld in the cultural life of their country, and they began to construct channels into which the spiritual life of the land could flow. They came to the conviction that they could best serve their country by leaving to the statesmen the necessary ordering of its material well-being and striving themselves as artists to enrich its spiritual treasury with values of esthetic importance, which were now more vital than the purely material interests.

It is not surprising that with such a transfer of the centre of interest the new writers should start a reaction

538 against the old and against those authors who had based
517 their art on the desire to give practical help to Bulgaria. The new art could not fail to take a position directly opposite to that of the older school, the dean of which was Ivan Vazov.

As we might expect, the three authors who at the beginning of the twentieth century directed the new movement for the invigoration of Bulgarian literature, Pencho Slaveykov, P. K. Yavorov, and P. Yu. Todorov, declared an open struggle against the influence of Vazov. Today we see that this struggle, which for a while seemed to be between representatives of irreconcilable schools, was unnecessary, that there was no yawning gulf between Vazov and the three younger men, that both sides had much in common, that they were both competent, had a serious idea of their poetical functions which they understood as a real mission to help their neighbors, and did not lose themselves in a struggle over abstract principles. Today we see the influence which his opponents exerted on Vazov and the aid which his ability gave them for the struggle against him. Since Slaveykov, Yavorov and Todorov introduced a new element into Bulgarian literature, their struggle with Vazov can be explained as the obvious development of a new and really independent group.

538 At the head of this group is Pencho Slaveykov (1866-
517 1912), son of the old Petko Slaveykov, whom we have
177 mentioned above. Pencho Slaveykov drew his new ideas from Germany where he lived for a while and where he felt the Hellenic influence of Goethe, the lyric and heroic humor of Heine and the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. These influences, combined with

those of Russian literature, led Pencho Slaveykov to break through the limitations of his lyric talents and to create works which have significance for world literature as well as for Bulgaria. The success of Pencho Slaveykov can be judged by the fact that in 1910, when an attempt was made to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for a Bulgarian poet, Pencho Slaveykov was put forward as a candidate, and had it not been for his premature death in 1912 at the age of 46, he would probably have received it. His poetic work which is really inferior to that of Vazov in substance and direct inspiration is superior to it in depth of thought and in its richness in universal problems, which the poet seeks to solve with artistic perfection. Slaveykov is the first conscious esthete among Bulgarian writers and he has also a deeply philosophical intellect. His ripe thought, tinged with pessimism and tempered with stoicism, enlightens and permeates the heavy, golden-sweet honey of his works—his splendid "Epic Songs", his tender lyric collection "Dream of Happiness", his original anthology "On the Islands of the Blessed". In this the poet under the pretence of translating from various foreign poets prints his own poems and he reveals various aspects of his creative personality in a series of clever biographical notes. His thought stands out and gives power to the "Song of Blood", an epic in which Slaveykov describes the uprising of 1876 and in which he tries to emphasize the salient characteristics of the Bulgarians, to explain the objects of their struggles and the nature of their oppression by the Turks, and by drawing a broad panorama of Bulgarian social life before the liberation, to predict the future of his country. It is further remarkable that

538 Slaveykov, although he based his poetic work on phil-
517 osophical and esthetic principles which he adopted from
177 Western Europe, yet remained loyal to the fundamental characteristic of all Bulgarian writers; he did not spurn reality, did not lose himself in impossible intellectual speculations, did not give up his love for his native land, but everywhere in his work he aimed to do good service to his fatherland. Because of this Pencho Slaveykov succeeded in creating works which were thoroughly intelligible to people who knew nothing of Bulgaria and which were yet as Bulgarian in substance as were those of his father Petko Slaveykov or Ivan Vazov. Such recognition is a mark of the high praise which Bulgarians accord his works.

538 Many consider the close friend and companion of Pencho Slaveykov, Peyu Yavorov (1878-1914), to be more gifted and significant than he, and without doubt, although he did not have the philosophical nature of Slaveykov, he was a more inspired and skilful artist. Yavorov enriched Bulgarian literature with nuances which had previously been unknown. He acquainted it with a great number of problems which perplex the modern man, as he is torn between a materialistic view of life and idealistic aspirations.

This struggle between faith and unbelief, between the need to devote himself unreservedly to a cause and the attempt to prove to his consciousness that such a sacrifice is superfluous, between an intuitive acceptance of all truths and a lack of confidence in human reason, between a deep and almost religious reverence for woman and an aversion to her, is the subject of his writings and is also the distinguishing mark of the life of Yavorov.

THE PASSING OF DEMOCRACY

garia to St Petersburgh, others wanted her chained to London, another party preferred Vienna, while a certain section had preferences for Berlin, and yet another group insisted that Bulgaria's foreign policy should be conducted from Constantinople. Unhappy land, her leaders endeavoured to tie her simultaneously to several mutually antagonistic protectors, and thus unwittingly acted against the interests of their country. Bulgaria suffered not so much from the treason of her neighbours, as from the shortsightedness and lack of scruples of those directing our foreign policy, in association with foreign consuls, whose protégés they were". (Kosta Arseniev, pp. 35-6.).

What moral forces remained, having survived Bulgaria's Europeanization, a process which was tantamount to the elimination of the patriarcal traditions of the Bulgarians, and their replacement by what was nothing but a thin veneer of civilization — were wholly absorbed in their confict with Tsar Ferdinand, that great factor of evil in their country.

He, in a true Machiavellian spirit, spread corruption broadcast, and vitiated the intelligentsia, in order to render all opposition to him impracticable and impossible. The diabolical refinements with which that process was pursued were set forth by Stoyan Mihailovsky, in his „Book for the Bulgarian people", published in 1897. The ease with which the intelligentsia succumbed to the malign influences which surrounded it, is chiefly due to its extreme poverty. Having sundered all connection with the peasant, artisan or trading class, from which he sprang, the intellectual scorned the idea of obtaining his livelihood by any other means than that of state employ. This desire to get employment under the Government, which is almost a passion among the Bulgarians, could not be satisfied in respect of every claimant owing to the limited number of public posts, and led to the formation of a legion of

661 hungry office-seekers, ready to offer their support to any
517 politician, who would hold out to them a promise of a State or municipal office. It is from this class, reckoned to number some 300,000 strong, that every party entrusted by the Crown with the task of government, recruited its staff, dangerously depleted during the lean years the party had passed in Opposition, and replaced all organs of authority, in order to influence and doctor the will of the electorate. A Cabinet would seldom owe its appointment to office to any other consideration than royal favour, for rarely indeed could it prove that it enjoyed the confidence of the people, since such a majority as it secured in the new Chamber was obtained by methods which were a negation of parliamentarism, and a clear violation of the national will.

[642] Party government in Bulgaria was always a disguised
661 dictatorship, which imposed itself by artifices that barely permitted it to save the outward forms of parliamentarism. Except on three occasions; in 1879, 1901 and 1931, there was never a free expression of the national will. The Chamber was maintained merely to save appearances, and in order to give to the people the illusion that it participated in the government of the country. The chief aim of a party, when in power, was the enrichment of its partisans and the constitution of some reserves for the lean years it had to remain in opposition. The more the rapacious instincts of partisans were satisfied, the more would a party prosper and grow powerful. An attempt to restrain the greed of its adherents would inevitably have led to its disruption. Corruption, therefore, was the basis of party life. Such an atmosphere paralysed every spiritual activity, and thwarted every noble initiative. Idealism, in fact, became an obstacle to the progress of a party, and law-breaking and peculation the main springs of its success. Before abandoning office, almost every government would vote

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000 and to work for its welfare, its success, its honour and glory, by the same motives which prompt him to desire and to work for his own welfare and success and honour... In this way, that is by extension to the group, the egoistic impulses are transmuted, sublimated and deprived of their individualistic selfish character and effects and are turned to public service".

•517 565 M. I. P. Kepov, a noted Bulgarian educationalist in his very informative book „Our actuality", not only sets out to lecture the intellectuals for their shortcomings pointing out to them several of their defects and the unfortunate concequences they have hitherto produced, but also dwells on their envy, their vindictivenecs, intolerance of others, their lack of idealism and attachment to traditions, their self-sufficiency and extreme materialism, and their contempt of the peasant class out of which they have all sprung. He has arraigned a formidable indictement against them, and he shares the view prevalent among the peasantry who ascribe to the intellectuals the main cause of their country's disasters. The book draws a very black picture of the social life of the Bulgarian, and unfortunately it can not be said that the author exaggerates. Such poverty in emotional life, mistrustfulness, and self-centredness cannot but be devastating to the soul, and some device must be found to blow up the Chinese walls with which every Bulgarian seems to have encased himself. By participating more largely in social life, he might be made to share the satisfactions and enjoyments accruing to every participant in active group life, for nobody will dispute Wm. Mc. Dougall's (op. cit. p. 68.) statement that:

„The consciousness of the group and of oneself as a member of it brings a sense of power and security, an assurance of sympathy and co-operation, a normal and physical support without which man can hardly face the world".

It is sad to record that the political institutions borrowed from the West, the extreme centralisation of the administration have been altogether uncongenial to the

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Bulgarian and have stifled what public spirit existed among them at their liberation. The Turk was not the hard task-master he was reported to be, on the contrary he was tolerant enough to permit the Bulgarians to conduct their communal life on the lines they thought best. This communal semi-independence fostered the growth of a group spirit that readily manifested itself during the early years of the country's independence, examples of which have been often noted. M. Kepov also alludes to the kindly and well-meant efforts of the teaching profession in those years, to the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice they showed in their attempts to spread education amongst their countrymen, but the blight of politics soon froze this budding sociability. The politician in his endeavour to become omnipotent persecuted the teachers as likely to work up public opinion against him, and any manifestations of independent thought on their part was punished by dismissal. Thus the teaching profession was alienated and turned for consolation to socialism. Instead of working for the spread of views likely to strengthen the prestige of the State, they started spreading subversive notions utterly foreign to the traditional conceptions of the community they lived in and which the peasantry could not assimilate. Thus those who ought to have guided the people in their upward path completely estranged themselves both from those in authority and from the popular masses. The peasantry, as was to be expected, could not at all appreciate the Marxian gospel and began to view very suspiciously these missionaries in their midst, especially when they attempted to undermine the national religion and customs, by the weapon of ridicule. The rest of the intellectuals looked upon the peasant masses with the same contempt and lack of interest. They took no notice of them until elections were drawing near when politicians would start visiting the

517 565 village and start inundating them in a spate of demagogic rhetoric. The orators of each political group would start vituperating and abusing their rivals, thus undermining completely the prestige of the intellectuals until the peasantry came to look on all with undisguised hatred and contempt. There has not been an example of such a deep cleavage within a people in recent times except in Tsarist Russia, with the well-known consequences, and if something is not done to assure the peasantry that the State will henceforth uphold and protect their interests, and instil in them the conviction that the abuses of the past are definitely over, we may well be anxious as to the future, for however self-sacrificing and patriotic the rulers of Bulgaria may be, the task they have shouldered is a stupendous one and the organs they must depend on for carrying it out are not as reliable as could be wished. And yet it is through the efforts of this „intelligentsia" that the country will have to work its way upwards, for the salvation of countries, the evolution of which has been retarded, depends on the predominance of urban civilisation over rural backwardness.

181 641 It is of undoubted interest to record the views of one of the leaders of the sole political party which was actuated by a true conception of democratic principles and which persistently upheld them, but which failed to rally round it sufficient supporters to impose them because the Bulgarian elector expected to get some direct advantages in exchange for his vote, a practice the Bulgarian Radicals always denounced and fought against.

Thus M. Kosturkov speaking in the Sobranye on December 21, 1926 said among other things:

„We are with servile souls. A nation impregnated with a sense of freedom and having a sense of self-respect does not allow the authorities to usurp its liberty and its rights. It is always ready to place its rulers in their due place. I am not indignant at the servi-

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A GROUP OF PEASANT WOMEN

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From left to right: D-r T. Yankov, M. Ilia Gheorgov, and the author

[facing p. 257]